

## IN AND AROUND JMTC

## NEW MRAP TRAINING IN EUROPE BUILDING SOLDIER CONFIDENCE

Story and photo by Christian Marquardt, JMTC Public Affairs

**The blast shakes the ground and sends up a cloud of dirt and leaves.**

**A convoy of Soldiers has been hit by an Improvised Explosive Device – or IED.**

Moments later, a large truck emerges through the dust of the explosion, followed by the rest of the convoy. They move off down the road to continue the mission. The Soldiers driving the truck – a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected, or MRAP, vehicle – have just passed another training test.



Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team maneuver a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle past an Improvised Explosive Device during a situational training exercise at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command's Hohenfels Training Area.

Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team are the first in Europe to use MRAPs as part of their mission rehearsal exercise in September at the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command's (JMTC) Hohenfels Training Area. The MRAPs are new to the training program in U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR). In July, 40 MaxPro Category 1 MRAPs were shipped from Kuwait to JMTC for use in Mission Rehearsal Exercises and vehicle familiarization for USAREUR Soldiers before they are deployed downrange. The vehicles are outfitted with more than 10 tons of armor and a sophisticated array of IED countermeasures, including a v-shaped hull to deflect explosions away from the vehicle, and suspension floors and seats that reduce the injuries caused by the shockwaves. After a short familiarization course on how to operate the MRAPs, the 173rd Soldiers incorporated the vehicles into the training scenarios in the training area. The tactics are similar to those used with the traditional High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle – better known as Humvees – with a few exceptions. "You have a really good view of the whole terrain, sort of like a bird's eye view, compared to the Humvee," said Specialist Luis Gutierrez, who just returned from his first training convoy using the MRAP. "You really get a sense of security when you're in there," said Gutierrez. "It's the thing of the future." JMTC will include the MRAPs in more of its future training rotations at its European training areas to better prepare Soldiers for the types of equipment and scenarios that they will experience downrange. "We're able to learn the equipment before it's just thrown at us, and we get to put it into play," said Gutierrez. "You don't want to be learning your equipment during the war."

## 2 SCR SOLDIERS FIRST IN EUROPE TO TEST THE ARMY'S NEWEST HOWITZER

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Fredrick P. Varney, 133rd MPAD



**A Soldier from Alpha Battery, Fires Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment (2SCR) unloads a shell for the fielding of the new M777 Howitzer at the JMTC Training Area in Grafenwoehr, Germany. Fires Squadron is the first Army Artillery Unit in Europe to field the M777.**



2SCR Soldiers prepare to fire the M777. The ranges on Grafenwoehr are the only place in Europe where units can hone their skills with large caliber weapon systems like the M777.



The 2SCR will continue to train with the new M777 Howitzer. The JMTC plays an integral role in helping 2SCR train, while continuing to enable the Army to modernize and improve by facilitating the testing of new methods, equipment and weaponry in Europe.

## VIRTUAL AIRCRAFT PROVE THEIR WORTH TO JMTC TRAINERS IN EUROPE

Photos by Msgt. Corey Clements, United States Air Force Europe Public Affairs  
Story by Denver Makle, JMTC PAO

**For the first time in Europe,** the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army trained with virtual aircraft attacking real targets on the ground in Germany.



On September 14, Joint and multinational forces participated in a proof-of-concept exercise for a new virtual fighter simulator called the Advanced Tactical Aircraft Simulator (ATAS), as part of the recent mission rehearsal exercise to prepare the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade for an upcoming deployment. The Joint Multinational Training Command and the Warrior Preparation Center, near Ramstein Air Base, consistently work together to enhance the overall joint training experience.

During the recent exercise, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC), an Airman that directs aircraft to destroy targets within close proximity to ground forces, viewed live targets on the ground. He called for close air support from a pilot flying a virtual fighter aircraft. The ATAS received an electronic feed of the targets provided by a MILES II instrumented system at the Hohenfels range, which represented the live assets on the ground.



These assets included Soldiers operating in the training environment and their vehicles, all in real-time. A pilot at the Warrior Preparation Center, about 4 hours away from the training site, saw the battlefield, and was able to destroy these real-world targets.

## MULTINATIONALS ACQUIRE MULTI-SKILLS AT GRAFENWOEHR TRAINING AREA



Story and photo by Sgt. Cassandra Groce, 133rd MPAD

**U.S. Marines, Airmen & German troops** practice pivot points, stress fires, movement firing and other combat essential skills at the Joint Multinational Training Command ranges in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The training helps to improve service

members skills beyond the conventional prone and foxhole positions rarely seen in combat, as well as give them the opportunity to work with a variety of military branches. Not so long ago, deploying troops practiced shooting from a foxhole or in the prone position. Looking down the firing line, you would see the same uniform. Today's ground forces find themselves shooting from a variety of positions – in stress situations – and thanks to the joint efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, alongside other service-members from around the world.

## IN AND AROUND JMTC

## RENOVATED INDOOR RANGE NOW OPEN IN STUTTGART



Story and photo by Eric Steen, TSC Stuttgart

**Stuttgart units welcomed the return of Panzer Kaserne's indoor range facility, Range 7,** during the Opening Ceremony more than 45 individuals representing 14 units and organizations in Stuttgart, and as far away as Baumholder attended the Event hosted by Training Support Center (TSC) Stuttgart, 7th U.S. Army JMTC. The Grand Opening marked the return of the range to a functional status by completing much needed improvements and renovations.

The renovation project, valued at more than \$650,000, provided the range with all new wooden baffles, a new floor that replaced the existing sand floor, a new bullet trap – the rubberized Gran Trap – that replaced the existing sand bullet catch, adjustments to the air evacuation system, and improvements to existing office spaces within the range complex. The project was conducted by the Corps of Engineers.

The range, constructed in 1983 as a combat theater for units on Panzer Kaserne, had seen only one previous renovation in October 2003, funded by United States Army Garrison Stuttgart. Since 2001, more than 1.4 million rounds of small arms have been fired were fired on the range. Of those, a total of 197,526 were fired in 2008.

In addition to firing capabilities, the range is a noise abatement measure to the surrounding Host Nation communities instead of firing on outdoor ranges.